

Revisiting Studies and Training in Gender and Development: The making and re-making of gender knowledge

The aim of the 'Revisiting studies and training in gender and development' conference, held in May 2007, was to critically analyse gender training and understand its role in relation to other efforts to forward gender equality. The conference was motivated in particular by a concern that attempts to build gender knowledge in development settings generally privilege formal learning (or 'didactic') models and often present knowledge as a set of skills to be acquired. Such an approach has not always achieved the expected results in terms of changes in gender relations. This conference report highlights four themes which emerged and were elaborated in the course of the conference: gender as a contested term; the limitations of technical approaches to gender training; the problems of 'locating' and contextualising training programmes; and finally specific challenges that real world implementation of gender training. Recommendations covered three main areas: the need to take stock of what has been happening in gender training in different places, and to adapt training for local contexts; the need to generate new gender knowledge to drive gender training processes (i.e. in different languages, addressing different political structures and processes, and focusing on different institutions); and strategies for reinvigorating gender training and re-politicising gender knowledge, including making it more flexible and diverse, and more closely related to personal experiences.

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